

Living

RURAL DISTRICT OF MERIDEN

HEALTH
MANAGER
C.R. 53

ANNUAL REPORT



of the

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR

Warren

1957

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To the Chairman and Members of the Meriden Rural District Council

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the state of the public health of the Meriden Rural District for the year 1957. In so doing, the social services provided by the Warwickshire County Council are not specifically mentioned as details of them will be found in the Annual Report of the County Medical Officer.

On the whole, the general health of the community was satisfactory although, compared with 1956, the incidence of notifiable infectious diseases showed a substantial increase. This was chiefly due to an outbreak of measles which tends to manifest itself in epidemic form every second year. Cases of whooping cough, which had doubled in the previous year, decreased slightly while notifications of scarlet fever and dysentery also markedly declined.

Pneumonia was twice as prevalent with almost a 50% mortality rate, mostly as a complication of influenza and not readily responsive to treatment with the modern drugs. The absence of any cases of diphtheria—none since 1949—was reassuring, although the immunisation level was still not so high as desirable. Nevertheless, the popularity of inoculation against whooping cough usually combined with that against diphtheria enabled a higher proportion of children to be protected than would otherwise have been possible.

While only one case of poliomyelitis was recorded in 1956, unfortunately 8 paralytic and 3 non-paralytic cases with one death occurred, mostly on the fringe of the Coventry area where the disease was prevalent. The vaccination campaign commenced in 1956 continued throughout the year, without any untoward incidents.

Notifications of tuberculosis again declined and this disease is no longer rated as one of the “captains of the kings of death.”

No cases of food poisoning were recorded.

Although the over-all picture of the cancer situation showed little change, deaths from cancer of the lung decreased with males still predominant.

The general volume and scope of the work of the inspectorate continued to increase and ample evidence of this is recorded in the Report of the Chief Public Health Inspector.

The shortage of staff in the second half of the year 1956 was overcome in December only to recur in January of the year under review until April when a replacement was made.

Inspections and visits for a variety of purposes were 8,591—a slight decrease compared with the preceding year and including some 681 complaints received and investigated. These complaints usually necessitated immediate or early action and frequently temporarily curtailed other work but flexible administration can always cope with such events. Examinations of foodstuffs (including meat), housing, nuisances, comprised over 50% of these visits with

water supplies, air pollution, caravans and food premises in that order. Rodent control accounted for 1,579 visits and reflects the importance of this work especially among the farming community.

Regarding housing, an early review of applications for rehousing by the Council showed a reduction to 621 from 724 the previous year. At the end of the year this figure had increased to 627 despite the erection of 42 dwellings. The reason for this anomaly is that rehousing of slum clearance tenants absorbed almost all of the new houses and building for general needs had to be restricted owing to the adverse economic situation.

Regarding slum clearance measures, although the number of houses actually demolished was only three, further substantial progress was made with confirmation of clearance orders already submitted to the Minister or with the preparation and forwarding of others to him. This work, involving detailed surveys of the premises concerned, resulted in proposals in respect of 49 structures being approved. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that out of 118 houses rendered fit for human habitation, 103 were reconditioned by their owners of their own accord and fully encouraged and assisted in so doing by the Council. A gratifying feature of the over-all housing situation is the very small element of serious overcrowding so detrimental to the health and well-being of the inmates.

The coming-into-force of the Rent Act 1957 resulted in no adverse repercussions and the volume of work arising from its implementation chiefly connected with Certificates of disrepair, was comparatively small.

Water supplies continued ample and, except for sources from wells, were wholesome. For a predominantly rural community the fact that 93.6% of its dwellings have a pipe-borne supply is worthy of note. No major schemes were undertaken but works involving the laying of some 2,000 yards of mains were completed in the parishes of Chadwick End, Fillongley and Meriden.

Meat inspections were continued on a 100% basis, and while only 10 of the 16 licensed slaughterhouses were in regular use, my comments on this aspect of the work of the inspectorate made in the Annual Report for 1956 are unchanged. With a view to implementing the provisions of the Slaughterhouses Act 1958 all the abattoirs were surveyed in detail and occupiers advised of any necessary action on their part.

Altogether, 21,037 animals were inspected of which over 50% were sheep and lambs and slightly under 25% were pigs. Cattle comprised one third of the total examined. On the whole, the percentage of carcasses condemned as unfit for human consumption was low, especially on account of tuberculosis chiefly found in cows which were comparatively few in number.

Further progress was made in the light of the Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955-56 with 361 inspections revealing 144 defects in 356 premises. All defects were rectified without formal action

whereby the co-operative attitude of those concerned was again revealed.

On the whole, milk supplies and premises were satisfactory and, of course, all milk sold in the District must be of the “ designated ” categories.

The situation regarding moveable dwellings was unchanged with 183 caravans, 6 huts and 97 tents on 23 licensed sites.

Rodent control work covered 370 premises—mostly domestic—and, out of 356 in need of treatment, 343 were rendered free of vermin with only 317 initial visits. The rat population of the Council’s sewers treated twice yearly is now almost nil.

The coming into force of the Clean Air Act was a further step towards the reduction of atmospheric pollution. The setting up of the Warwickshire Clean Air Council, of which all but two of the local authorities in the County became members, enabled a survey of the needs of the area in respect of measurement gauges and their siting to be carried out by the Technical Sub-Committee. The zeal and enthusiasm displayed by the field workers of this Committee—mainly Health Inspectors—has been duly acknowledged by the Clean Air Council.

Four grit gauges and nine sulphur dioxide instruments continued to record the amount of pollution with no significant change, despite the operation of the new Station C at Hams Hall Electricity Generating Station, near Coleshill. It is of more than passing interest to record that the average daily fuel consumption of this large undertaking is 5,500 tons with an ash residue of 1,200 tons.

I am indebted to your Engineer and Surveyor for the information regarding sewerage, sewage disposal and refuse collection.

In conclusion, I wish to record my appreciation of the work of the staff and the ready co-operation of the members of the other departments and to thank you for your encouragement and support throughout the year.

R. S. McELROY

Medical Officer of Health.

Park Road,
COLESHILL.

August, 1958.

MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

1 9 5 7

Chairman of the Council :

WALTER BERNARD NEAL, J.P.

Vice-Chairman of the Council :

JOHN SAMUEL BREEDEN

Clerk of the Council :

S. F. WOODHAMS

Public Health Committee : 1957-58

Antrobus, W.	Clifton, Mrs. F. M.	Moore, R. E.
Brian, H.	Earle, R. J.	Neal, W. B.
Butler, F. S.	Fish, E. G.	Schofield, W. F.
Callwood, H. J.	Gee, Capt. D.	Spencer, R. G.
Caines, B. G.	Gregg, Mrs. M.	Stewart, J. D.
Cashmore, H. S.	Harper, R. H.	Wheatley, Mrs. C. M.
Chater, R. H.		

Housing Committee : 1957-58

Ash, F. J.	Jackson, Mrs. V. L.	Prosser, D. W.
Breeden, J. S.	Kelsey, E. J.	Shaw, W. J.
Cooper, J.	Lawrence, R. M.	Spencer, R. G.
Earle, R. J.	Lowe, G. H.	Stewart, J. D.
Guernsey, Lord	Lynall, Mrs. G. M.	Victor-Halford, C. A.
Hales, A. F.	Parry, Mrs. E. I.	Wyldbore-Smith, A. R.
Hamar, J.		

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF

AS AT 31st DECEMBER, 1957

Medical Officer of Health :

R. S. McELROY, M.A., M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H., D.T.M.

(Also Medical Officer of Health, Tamworth Rural District Council
and Area Medical Officer, North Western Area, Warwickshire
County Council)

Chief Public Health Inspector :

R. HAINES, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

Deputy Chief Public Health Inspector :

G. B. STOKES, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspectors :

R. D. BROWN, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.
(Resigned January 1957)

J. W. BOLTON, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

W. W. G. CUTTS, M.A.P.H.I.

T. P. BERESFORD, M.A.P.H.I.
(Appointed April, 1957)

Chief Clerk :

J. D. MYNARD

Council Offices :

Old Bank House,
Church Hill,
Coleshill.

Telephone : Coleshill 3141.

Office of the Medical Officer of Health :

Area Health Office,
Park Road,
Coleshill.

Telephone : Coleshill 2331-2.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Population (Estimated Mid. 1957).....	49,490
Area in acres	61,775
No. of inhabited houses (Dec., 1957).....	13,505
Rateable value (at 1st April, 1957).....	£535,302
Product of a penny rate	£2,232

VITAL STATISTICS

Births.

Live Births	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	480	415	895
Illegitimate	11	12	23
Totals	491	427	918

Birth Rate.

18.55 per 1,000 estimated population.

1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948
18.55	17.37	16.14	17.53	16.82	15.50	15.54	17.5	18.2	20.2

Still Births.

Still Births	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	10	7	17
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	10	7	17

Still Birth Rate.

18.18 per 1,000 total (live and still) births.

1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948
18.18	21.67	25.35	16.99	19.81	28.1	32.2	18.2	19.5	28.0

Deaths.

	Males	Females	Total
Deaths from all causes ..	189	153	342

Crude Death Rate.

6.91 per 1,000 estimated population.

1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948
6.91	7.49	8.35	8.26	8.8	8.3	10.3	9.2	8.7	9.0

Classified Causes of Death

Cause of Death		Males	Females	Total
1.	Tuberculosis, Respiratory	3	—	3
2.	Tuberculosis, other	—	1	1
3.	Syphilitic disease	—	—	—
4.	Diphtheria	—	—	—
5.	Whooping Cough	—	—	—
6.	Meningococcal infections	—	—	—
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	—	1	1
8.	Measles	—	—	—
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases ..	—	1	1
10.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	5	4	9
11.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus ..	9	2	11
12.	Malignant neoplasm, breast	—	9	9
13.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	—	1	1
14.	Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	23	11	34
15.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	—	1	1
16.	Diabetes	—	1	1
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system ..	22	27	49
18.	Coronary disease, angina	31	16	47
19.	Hypertension with heart disease	6	11	17
20.	Other heart disease	20	13	33
21.	Other circulatory disease	7	6	13
22.	Influenza	4	3	7
23.	Pneumonia	9	13	22
24.	Bronchitis	10	2	12
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system ..	2	1	3
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	1	2
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	2	1	3
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis	2	1	3
29.	Hyperplasia of prostate	1	—	1
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion.....	—	—	—
31.	Congenital malformations	1	6	7
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases ..	19	15	34
33.	Motor vehicle accidents	6	1	7
34.	All other accidents	5	4	9
35.	Suicide	1	—	1
36.	Homicide and operations of war	—	—	—
37.	All causes	189	153	342

Population and Birth and Death Ratio.

Year		Estimated Population	Total Live Births	Total Deaths	Birth and Death ratio
1948	..	35,380	714	319	+395
1949	..	36,160	656	313	+343
1950	..	36,990	646	340	+306
1951	..	37,950	590	390	+200
1952	..	37,790	586	315	+271
1953	..	38,220	643	339	+304
1954	..	39,590	694	327	+367
1955	..	42,870	692	358	+334
1956	..	46,820	813	351	+462
1957	..	49,490	918	342	+576

Maternal Deaths .. Nil.

Infant Deaths (under 1 year of age)

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	10	9	19
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	10	9	19

Infant Mortality Rate.

20.7 per 1,000 births.

1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948
20.7	22.1	30.3	28.8	35.7	32.4	34	46	26	29

Infant Deaths (under 4 weeks of age).

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	8	6	14
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	8	6	14

Neonatal Death Rate .. 15.2 per 1,000 live births.

Comparative Birth and Death Rates per 1,000 population.

	Meriden Rural District	England and Wales (provisional)
Births		
Live Births ..	*17.06	16.1
Still Births ..	18.18(a)	22.4(a)
Deaths		
All causes	*9.74	11.5
Infant Mortality ..	20.7(b)	23.0(b)
Neonatal mortality	15.2(b)	

* Using comparability factors (Births 0.92 and Deaths 1.41).

(a) per 1,000 total live and still births.

(b) per 1,000 live births.

Cancer.

	Male	Female	Total
Total Deaths all Forms	37	27	64

Cancer Death Rate = 1.29 per 1,000 estimated population.

Population

The Registrar General's estimate of the population at mid-year was 49,490 an increase of 2,670 over the 1956 figure of 46,820. This increase occurred mostly in the Parish of Kingshurst where the large scale housing development by Birmingham Housing Department continued.

Births

At 17.06 per 1,000 estimated population the Standardised Birth Rate was higher than the corresponding figure of 16.1 for England and Wales. This Rate is in keeping with the expanding nature of the population of the Kingshurst and Castle Bromwich Parishes where married couples of the younger age groups predominate, especially in the former, as part of the Birmingham overspill.

Deaths

The comparative Death Rate of 9.74 per 1,000 population of the District remained lower than the provisional figure of 11.5 for England and Wales. The Crude Death Rate of 6.91 per 1 000 population is the lowest for 15 years—further evidence that people are living longer and, also, what is more important from an economic standpoint, of the necessity for providing amenities for this “ snow-

balling ” older age group of the community. The pattern of the chief causes of death showed no change from 1956 with heart disease, cancer and vascular lesions of the nervous system predominating in the order given. Cancer in various forms accounted for 65 deaths and, of these, 11 were due to new growths of the lung with 9 males and 2 females affected.

The occurrence of no maternal deaths for six successive years is a tribute to the care and skill of all concerned with this work.

Among notifiable infectious diseases, pneumonia caused 22 deaths giving a mortality rate of almost 50% chiefly affecting the younger and older age-groups and still challenging the resources of the research workers and physicians in their quest for more powerful remedies.

National Assistance Act, 1948

The number of cases requiring assessment for admission to hospital or residential accommodation increased but this important aspect of the welfare of the chronic sick and indigent was seriously handicapped by the acute shortage of accommodation. It is pleasing to be able to report that in no instance was statutory action necessary.

SECTION B.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Total number of cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1957.

Notifiable Disease	Number of Cases Notified. (Comparative figures for 1956 in parenthesis) at Ages — Years								Total cases re- moved to Hospital	Total Deaths
	At all ages	Un- der 1	1-5	5-15	15-25	25-45	45-65	65 and up- w'ds.		
Measles	1,006 (7)	19	443	533	5	6	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	112 (118)	6	42	60	2	2	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	3 (5)	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—
Enteric Fever	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	15 (92)	—	2	9	3	1	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	48 (25)	2	9	7	2	5	9	14	2	22
Malaria	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery	36 (122)	—	4	24	5	3	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	118 (100)	—	—	—	69	49	—	—	116	—
Meningococcal Infection	— (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis : Paralytic	8 (1)	—	2	5	—	1	—	—	8	1
Non-paralytic	3 (—)	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	3	—
Acute Infective Encephalitis	1 (1)	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Encephalitis Lethargica	— (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	34 (23)	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	32	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	18 (26)	—	—	3	3	8	3	1	3	3
Other forms of Tuberculosis	3 (2)	—	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	1
Food Poisoning	— (2)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	1,405 (525)	61	505	642	90	79	13	15	165	27

General Comment

Compared with 1956, notifications of infectious diseases were nearly trebled (1,405 : 525) the large increase mostly arising from the high incidence of measles while scarlet fever and dysentery sharply declined. The incidence of poliomyelitis rose from a single case in 1956 to nine with one death. There were no cases of small-pox or diphtheria.

Measles

The figure of 1,006 cases notified revealed a large outbreak of this familiar malady of childhood which was probably more widespread than this and in keeping with the general trend in England and Wales where, in the previous year cases notified were the lowest recorded since the introduction of notification in 1939.

Whooping Cough

Unlike measles, whooping cough displays no regular periodicity in its annual fluctuation and the years of greater incidence have been distributed almost haphazardly. A total of 112 notifications was almost the same (118) as in 1956 with the majority in the 1-15 years age group. Immunisation against the disease (usually combined with diphtheria) has continued to be popular and it is now felt that the vaccine in current use may successfully reduce the home exposure attack rate from about 80% to 30% or less. The following table sets forth the numbers inoculated.

Table showing Number of Children Immunised against Whooping Cough in 1957.

(Comparative figures for 1956 are in parenthesis).

Age at Date of Injection				
0—1	1—2	2—5	5—15	Total
452 (456)	80 (111)	59 (62)	1 (27)	592 (656)

Diphtheria

For the eighth successive years no cases of this erstwhile prevalent and frequently fatal malady have occurred.

One possible case of a young adult female fortunately proved negative. Nevertheless, the close contacts in the institution where she was employed, mainly young children, were tested for immunity to the disease and, where necessary, immunisation was carried out by the general practitioner in charge.

The Schedule sub-pended gives details of immunisations in 1957 (including booster doses) by County Council Medical Officers and family doctors. From this it will be seen that while the number primary injections fell slightly the number of reinforcing or booster doses rose appreciably.

Table showing number of Children Immunised against Diphtheria during 1957.
(Comparative figures for 1956 are given in parenthesis).

	Age at date of injection.							Total
	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	
Primary.....	460 (465)	85 (110)	27 (38)	13 (18)	12 (13)	39 (53)	1 (2)	637 (699)
Reinforcing ..	— (—)	— (1)	— (1)	2 (3)	75 (73)	471 (323)	209 (58)	757 (459)
Totals ..	460 (465)	85 (111)	27 (39)	15 (21)	87 (86)	510 (376)	210 (60)	1394 (1158)

Smallpox

No cases occurred nor was it necessary to keep under surveillance any contacts of patients elsewhere. The total number of vaccinations performed is given in the following Table from which will be noted an overall increase compared with the preceding year and, in fact, with the three preceding years. When related to the 918 live births during the year, the 436 primary vaccinations under the age of 1 year done represent a vaccination acceptance rate of 47.5% which compares favourably with that of 38.4 for 1956 in England and Wales.

Table showing Number of Persons Vaccinated against Smallpox in 1957.
(Comparative figures for 1956 are given in parenthesis).

	Under 1	1	2-4	5-15	15 or over	Totals
Vaccinated	436 (365)	21 (15)	24 (14)	34 (12)	37 (24)	452 (430)
Re-Vaccinated ..	— (—)	— (1)	3 (1)	12 (8)	62 (55)	77 (65)
Totals	436 (365)	21 (16)	27 (15)	46 (20)	99 (79)	529 (495)

Scarlet Fever

Notifications fell to 15, all of a mild nature with none requiring admission to hospital.

Pneumonia

The incidence was almost doubled to 48 cases with 22 deaths. A likely potent factor in this increase was the epidemic of Asian influenza in the second half of the year.

Dysentery

Compared with 1956 when there was 122 cases, only 36 notifications were received and none required admission to hospital.

Puerperal Pyrexia

Reports totalled 118—all from the large Marston Green Maternity Hospital where deliveries were 3,018 for the year, so that the incidence is relatively low.

Acute Poliomyelitis

Compared with 1956 when a single case occurred, 8 paralytic and 3 non-paralytic patients were notified with one fatal outcome in a female child. The majority of the cases were located in the Keresley Parish bordering on Coventry where the incidence was much higher. Good progress was made with the vaccination campaign and some 2,430 persons received the two prescribed injections in the Meriden and Tamworth Rural Districts, since the campaign started in 1956 up to the end of 1957.

Tuberculosis

During the year 18 cases of the pulmonary and 3 cases of the non-pulmonary type of the disease were reported. Three of the former type were admitted to hospital whereas in 1956 some 18 out of 26 cases of this nature were hospitalized. In recent years, with the improved drugs, it has been found possible to arrange treatment at home of many patients who previously had to become in-patients.

Taking into account 18 new cases in the District and 35 inward transfers and allowing for 27 removals, the number of cases of the pulmonary type of the disease on the Register at the end of the year increased by 26 to 269 ; non-pulmonary cases on the Register remained the same at 48. There were only 3 deaths.

Total number of Tuberculous persons remaining on Register at 31st December, 1957.

	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F
1. Total on register at 31st December, 1956	134	109	25	23
2. New Cases	6	12	1	2
3. Inward Transfers	21	14	1	—
4. Removals	18	9	2	2
5. Total on register at 31st December, 1957	143	126	25	23

The Chest Clinic, opened in Coleshill in 1954, functions very satisfactorily and Dr. W. E. Zundel the Chest Physician has continued in charge with the radiographer from St. Gerard's Hospital, Coleshill still in attendance. This Clinic operates on Tuesday mornings and alternate Wednesday mornings.

Cases attending Coleshill Chest Clinic at 31st December, 1957.

	Men	Women	Children	Totals
Pulmonary	63	64	12	139
Non-Pulmonary	6	8	10	24
Totals	69	72	22	163

The B.C.G. Vaccination Clinic opened in February, 1955 and from the Table sub-pended it will be seen that 27 children were inoculated.

No. of persons vaccinated at Coleshill B.C.G. Clinic during 1957.

Men	Women	Children	Total
1	8	27	36

As in 1956, rehousing of tuberculous persons was largely confined to the Kingshurst Hall Estate which continued to expand. Supervision of cases and contacts was fully maintained and, on the whole, those concerned co-operated.

The sex incidence and age groups of the new cases is recorded in the following table and once again the highest incidence was amongst the 15-35 year age group. The Death Rate remained low with 4 fatal cases giving a figure of 0.06 per 1,000 population.

Age and Sex Distribution of New Cases and Deaths notified during 1957.

Age Periods		New Cases				Deaths			
		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	..	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
5	..	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	..	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	..	2	3	—	2	—	—	—	—
35	..	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45	..	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
55	..	—	1	—	—	3	—	—	—
65 and upwards	..	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Totals	..	6	12	1	2	4	—	—	—

Infected milk supplies are investigated by the County Health Department and the position during the year was as follows :—

Tuberculous Milk Investigations—Routine Milk Samples for Biological Examination during the year 1957.

Designation of Milk	Total No. of Samples	No. Positive
Pasteurised	3	Nil
Tuberculin Tested (Pasteurised).....	3	Nil
Tuberculin Tested	15	Nil
Non-designated	165	6

Results of Investigations of Tubercle Infected Milk Supplies during the year 1957.

No. of :—	Cases found on routine sampling in the County	Cases reported by neighbouring County Authorities
1. Investigations	6	—
2. Cows examined	200	—
3. Milk samples for diagnostic purposes	33	—
4. Cows slaughtered under Tuberculosis order	7	—
5. Cows removed from herds during investigations and which may have been infected	1	—

Food Poisoning

No cases were reported.

Report of the Chief Public Health Inspector

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I submit my report on the work of the Department for the year 1957.

Mr. R. D. Brown, one of the additional inspectors, resigned in January 1957 after six years in the Council's service, on securing another appointment. His place was taken by Mr. T. P. Beresford, who began his duties in April 1957.

R. HAINES,
Chief Public Health Inspector.

Town Hall,
COLESHILL.

GENERAL INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

Inspections and visits made for various purposes are summarized in the following table :—

Housing	1,404
Overcrowding	32
Rent Act	51
Nuisances	1,464
Air pollution	302
Food examination	2,106
Slaughterhouses (concerning premises)	64
Food premises generally	290
Food stalls and vehicles	47
Bakehouses	17
Dairies	7
Water supplies	349
Camping sites and moveable dwellings	293
Factories	39
Shops	73
Infectious diseases (including food poisoning)	173
Rodent control	1,579
Miscellaneous	301
	<hr/>
	8,591
	<hr/>

Complaints received and investigated totalled 681.

NUISANCES.

The following nuisances were reported and dealt with :

Accumulations of refuse	16
Animals so kept	1
Cesspools overflowing	24
Closets defective and insanitary	23
Drains choked and defective	50
Dustbins defective or absent	14
Foul ditches and water-courses.....	28
Smoke, dust and effluvia	37
Vermin infestation	3
Housing defects :	
Dampness	25
Defective walls	7
,, roofs	17
,, chimneys.....	8
,, windows and doors	13
,, rainwater conductors	12
,, wall and ceiling plaster	19
,, floors	17
,, firegrates.....	6
,, stairs	1
,, paving	1
Unsatisfactory water supplies	3

325

This table does not include defects at houses recorded under the Consolidated Regulations, for action under Part II of the Housing Act, 1957.

There was no significant improvement in the condition of the River Cole, mentioned in the 1956 report. A further complaint about nuisance from floating sewage material was reported to the Public Health Committee, but it appeared impracticable to pursue the matter further.

Reference was made in the 1956 report to a nuisance from the accidental burning of a large bank of sewage sludge, which had been deposited for manufacture into fertilizer. A similar deposit, just outside the district boundary, caught fire in May 1957 and caused a serious nuisance from smoke and smell. The fire was extinguished after several days, at the Department's request. Later the accidental firing of a large disused sludge bed at Minworth sewage works caused considerable nuisance in the village of Water Orton. This proved to be a much more difficult problem. The deposit was several acres in extent and many feet deep. Owing to the danger, it was impossible to work on the surface, and attempts at flooding were unsuccessful and had to be abandoned. The fire

continued for many weeks and ultimately burnt itself out, but fortunately a change of wind direction carried most of the smoke and smell away from the inhabited area.

A dust nuisance of serious proportions was reported in April in the vicinity of the Hams Hall generating stations, caused by the transporting by road of many hundreds of tons of fly ash daily to various worked-out gravel pits in the neighbourhood. The material, excavated from large lagoons, had a high moisture content, and lorries traversing it after unloading were frequently sinking into it to axle depth. Consequently they left on the roads considerable quantities of the sludge, which dried and formed dust. The matter was dealt with primarily by the Lea Marston Parish Council who, after reporting it, called a conference of their own with the Electricity Authority, the contractor concerned and other interested parties. Subsequent remedial measures taken were largely successful. They included re-routing the lorries, improvements to the body design of the vehicles, greater attention to load trimming and a system of vehicle washing. Later observations confirmed that the nuisance had ceased for practical purposes.

A nuisance from smoke and effluvia arising from a process of pig-food cooking was the subject of complaints at Curdworth. Lengthy negotiations with the person responsible, culminating in the service of statutory notices, resulted in the installation of a large autoclave costing several hundred pounds. The nuisance, although very much reduced, was not entirely abated, there being some smell whilst the cooked food is decanted into open tanks for use. However, having regard to the "best practicable means" defence the matter could not be pursued further, although occasional complaints are still received.

Informal requests to secure the provision of dustbins were again successful in most of the cases reported, but statutory notices had to be served in 5 cases, 2 on owners and 3 on occupiers.

Closet conversion work was continued on a reduced scale during the year, the main limiting factor being lack of administrative time. The cases dealt with included 10 Council houses at Oak Lane, Barston, one-half of the cost being charged to the general rate fund under section 47 of the Public Health Act, 1936, by direction of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

The following is a summary of formal notices served during the year under the Public Health Act, 1936, in respect of nuisances and similar matters :—

Section	Subject	No. of cases
24	Maintenance of sewers	3
39	Defective drainage	1
50	Overflowing cesspools	2
92 and 93	Nuisances	4
138	Absence of piped water supply	1

HOUSING

Due to changes in financial circumstances affecting local authority building, it was found necessary to devote the whole of the current building programme to slum clearance requirements. Forty-two new houses were completed during the year and used for this purpose. A review of applications, completed early in the year, showed a reduction to 621, from 724 the previous year. During 1957, 121 houses were let (including 79 casual vacancies in existing houses) but by the end of the year the number of outstanding applications was still about the same—627. Since some of the slum clearance tenants re-housed were already on the general list, it follows that the casual vacancies alone would not have been sufficient to balance the new applications. With no early prospect of building for general needs, there must inevitably be a further lengthening of the waiting period, already averaging between 5 and 6 years. It is however not unusual to find that an applicant with one or more children does not yet qualify for inclusion in the electors' register, and the fact that people choose to marry and have families whilst very young, regardless of the availability of accommodation, adds considerably to the Council's problem of providing adequate houses.

The houses which became vacant during the year were let to applicants in the following groups :—

General needs (mainly lodger cases)	..	43
Slum clearance cases	.. ..	5
Statutory overcrowding	.. ..	1
T.B. priority	.. ..	1
Old persons	.. ..	5
Agricultural workers	.. ..	11
Industrial workers (special scheme)	..	7
Teacher (by virtue of employment)	..	1
Nurse (by virtue of employment)	..	1
Council officers (by virtue of employment)		4
		79

The 42 new houses completed during the year were 34 three bedroom types, 4 with two bedrooms, and 4 "maisonettes" having one bedroom each, all at Coleshill. A further 20 houses and 8 maisonettes at Coleshill, and 8 houses and 6 bungalows at Corley, were under construction at the end of the year.

There is now a marked reduction in the demand for agricultural houses. The Council have 87 houses reserved for agricultural workers for which they receive the special subsidy. Already a few of them have had to be let away, for lack of agricultural applications, but equivalent houses would be made available from casual vacancies if required. Most of the agricultural houses are "tied" to the industry, but none to individual employers. Even the general condition that the tenants should work in agriculture is becoming increasingly unpopular and difficult to justify, and the rents, although somewhat lower than those of the other Council houses, still greatly

exceed those which employers can charge for “ tied ” privately owned cottages. A rent rebate scheme, introduced during the year, provides for minimum rents which are still much above that of the average farm cottage, and many farm workers, if compelled to live in a “ tied ” house, prefer one which may be older and less convenient, but is nevertheless substantially cheaper.

Slum Clearance

The quarterly returns made to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government refer mainly to houses actually demolished, and do not therefore fully show the considerable progress made. In a number of cases, although demolition had not been carried out at the end of the year, demolition and clearance orders had been made and the occupants of unfit houses had been re-housed.

Two clearance orders made in 1956, involving 16 houses, were confirmed during the year. A further six clearance orders, affecting 44 houses, were made, and four of them, in respect of 33 houses, were confirmed, all without modification. In one case a local Hearing was held, objections having been lodged by the owners of a substantial grocery business carried on in one of the properties affected. They contended that the property, having been used for business purposes for many years, was not a “ house ” and could not therefore be properly included in the order, but the Minister upheld the Council’s view that it was basically a house, with minor adaptations for business use. In spite of occasional objections the Council have no evidence that anything worse than temporary inconvenience is caused to owners by the condemning of unfit houses, since almost invariably the cleared sites are suitable for some kind of redevelopment, and are consequently more valuable than the occupied houses which they formerly accommodated.

Confirmation of two clearance orders was awaited at the end of the year.

A compulsory purchase order, made and confirmed in respect of 11 houses, was unopposed, although previous attempts to negotiate with the owners had been unsuccessful. The houses are old and defective and are not worth “ patching,” even temporarily. The site, which adjoins land which the Council intend using for other new houses, is required for redevelopment.

The following table summarizes the action taken :—

Individual houses

Demolition orders made	..	..	..	..	20
Houses demolished	..	..	..	..	3
Closing orders made	..	..	..	..	7
Undertakings accepted from owners not to use for human habitation	..	..	..	..	2
Closing order determined after house had been made fit by owner	..	..	..	..	1
Houses made fit—					
voluntarily, by owners	..	..	..	..	103
by owners, after formal notices	..	..	..	..	4
by Council, in default of owners	..	..	..	..	11

Clearance Areas

Clearance orders made	..	..	..	..	6
Houses affected	..	..	..	..	44
Compulsory purchase order made	..	..	..	..	1
Houses affected	..	..	..	..	11

Overcrowding

There is still only a little real overcrowding in the district. Most of it seems to be in the Council's own houses, though this may be partly because the circumstances in Council-owned property are better known. It is due mainly to natural increase, and everything practicable is done to deal with it by transfers to more suitable houses. Fifty-eight transfers were arranged during the year, principally to make the best possible use of available accommodation. There is however a shortage of 4-bedroom type houses, which experience has shown to be difficult to provide economically. The following table gives the position at the end of the year.

No. of private houses known to be overcrowded	4
No. of Council houses known to be overcrowded	8
No. of families involved	14
No. of persons involved	103
Cases relieved during the year—	
by Council	5
otherwise	1
	6

Rent Act, 1957

Despite the very wide publicity given to the new provisions very few cases were referred to the Council, from which it seems that landlords and tenants were generally able to agree. It is known that some landlords did not take advantage of the Act and increase their rents, and many tenants accepted increased rents without exercising their right to secure the carrying out of necessary repairs. Some of the cases referred to the Council included items such as dilapidated garden gates and boundary walls, which were not matters of public health. Indeed the Rent Act is not of itself a public health measure and it is unfortunate that the inspectors have to be concerned with it at all. By its provisions, the Council are required to act in the roll of minor referees, every decision they make being liable to be challenged by either side. The Council already have very adequate powers under the Housing and Public Health Acts to deal with unsatisfactory housing accommodation, and experience shows that action by a tenant under the Rent Act can prevent an increase of rent but cannot necessarily secure the carrying out of repairs.

Action taken during the year is given in the table below :—

Applications for certificates of disrepair received (form I)	20
Notices to landlords of intention to issue certificates of disrepair (form J)	18
Undertakings to do repairs received from landlords (form K)	9
Certificates of disrepair issued (form L)	7

WATER SUPPLIES

The following table gives the results of bacteriological examination of water samples taken during the year :—

	Satisfactory	Unfit	Total
Old wells	5	38	43
New wells	3	3	6
Springs	3	—	3
Mains	1	—	1
	12	41	53

Ten samples were submitted for chemical analysis, five being reported satisfactory and 5 unfit.

The position regarding piped water supplies is generally satisfactory, the percentage of houses having piped water being 93.6.

The table below shows the position in each parish :—

Piped Water Supplies.

Parish	Houses	Birmingham Water Dept.	Coventry Water Dept.	Others
Allesley	738	—	689	—
Arley	928	—	—	918
Astley	66	—	—	36
Balsall	836	—	755	—
Barston	136	—	112	—
Berkswell	616	—	540	—
Bickenhill	737	706	—	—
Castle Bromwich	2,454	2,449	—	—
Coleshill	1,139	1,070	—	—
Corley	218	—	214	—
Curdworth	155	134	—	—
Fillongley	417	268	—	14
Hampton-in-Arden	414	—	378	—
Keresley	995	—	990	—
Kingshurst	1,649	1,626	—	—
Lea Marston	83	59	—	—
Maxstoke	86	34	—	—
Meriden	505	—	463	—
Packingtons	63	—	5	—
(Great & Little)				
Shustoke	144	137	—	—
Water Orton ..	694	687	—	—
Nether Whitacre	253	248	—	—
Over Whitacre..	110	84	—	—
Wishaw	62	—	—	26
Total	13,498	7,502	4,146	994

These figures are based on information supplied by the respective water departments. There is however some difficulty in relating them accurately to parish boundaries, and the parish totals are approximate only.

The parishes of Arley and Astley were incorporated in the Nuneaton water supply area as from the 1st April, 1957. Supplies have since been maintained satisfactorily and there has been no complaint.

A short extension of a water main at Cuttle Pool Lane, Knowle, was carried out at an estimated cost of £130.

A new main of about 1,250 yards, to supply 8 houses and 2 dairy farms, was laid at Tippers Hill, Fillongley, the scheme having been approved in 1956. There was no Ministry grant, but the County Council had promised a grant based on their usual formula, and certain of the owners who would benefit had promised small contributions.

The scheme for providing mains water to the Lodge Green area of Meriden, involving an extension of about 660 yards of 4in. main, was carried out during the year. The estimated cost was £1,410, towards which contributions totalling £300 were received from private owners. The County Council had promised a grant calculated on their scale, but there was no contribution from Ministry funds.

Advice was received from Coventry Corporation of their intention to lay a new main for engineering purposes along the Warwick Road, northwards from the Severn Aqueduct at Chadwick End to Heronfield, Knowle. Advantage was therefore taken to consider the needs of the Arbour Tree Lane locality. There, 10 houses and a dairy farm depend for supplies on 8 shallow wells, all of which were found to be polluted. A scheme was approved for laying a 4in. branch main, about 450 yards long, at an estimated cost of £1,070, but the work had not been started by the end of the year.

The scheme for providing a short branch main from the Severn Aqueduct at Fen End, Balsall, to supply Gate Farm and several neighbouring houses, although approved in 1956, had still not been carried out at the end of the year.

Seven houses at Dunton Wharf, Curdworth, have no proper water supply. Several years ago an attempt was made to obtain a supply by deepening an existing well without success, and one of the two owners involved has carted water to the property for many years. A scheme for providing mains water was rejected in 1952 as being too costly. The matter was raised afresh in 1957, when the owners concerned offered private contributions totalling £750.

The total cost was then estimated at £3,350, for about 1,110 yards of 4in. main, which still left an average of over £370 per house to be borne by public funds. The Council declined to proceed with the scheme and asked the owners to investigate the possibility of taking a long service pipe over private property. There were difficulties, however, and no progress had been made by the end of the year.

FOOD INSPECTION

Slaughterhouses and Meat Inspection

Ten of the sixteen licensed slaughterhouses are in regular use, the remainder being used only occasionally, or not at all. After publication of the new draft Regulations (Cmd 243), all the slaughterhouses were specially inspected, and lists were prepared and supplied to the occupiers of matters in respect of which the premises fell short of the proposed requirements. A few minor improvements have since been made. For economic and other reasons, it may be difficult to bring some of the slaughterhouses up to the standard which the new Regulations will require, especially where the premises have only occasional use. The slaughterhouses in their present condition provide a reasonable standard of hygiene, although some are small, badly sited and poorly constructed.

The volume of slaughtering again showed a small increase, and 100% inspection was maintained. Sunday and evening slaughtering and inspections are still regular features of the work. Some of the meat from local slaughterhouses goes to butchers in other areas, including some which is killed on Sundays. It is probable that a correspondingly larger amount, from slaughterhouses outside the district, is sold by local butchers who do not have slaughtering facilities, and one hopes that this meat is inspected at the places of slaughter with equal care and vigilance, since it is impracticable to carry out regular inspections of meat consigned to the district from outside sources.

The following table shows the number of animals inspected and the condemnations, the total amount condemned being again a relatively small proportion of the quantity inspected.

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Goat
Number killed	2,768	289	258	12,573	5,148	1
Number inspected	2,768	289	258	12,573	5,148	1
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</i>						
Whole carcasses condemned	4	21	6	20	15	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	312	64	7	295	329	—
Percentage of the num- ber inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysti- cerci	11.42	29.41	5.04	2.5	6.68	—
<i>Tuberculosis only</i>						
Whole carcasses condemned	2	4	—	—	1	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	177	42	—	—	76	—
Percentage of the num- ber inspected affected with tuberculosis	6.47	15.92	—	—	1.5	—
<i>Cysticercosis</i>						
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	20	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigera- tion	14	3	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned	1	—	—	—	—	—

Details of carcasses and offals condemned are given in the table below.

Whole Carcasses

Animals No.		Reason for condemnation	Approx. weight (lbs.)
Cattle (exclud- ing cows)	2	Generalized Tuberculosis	1,029
	1	Generalized Oedema	350
	1	Septicaemia	380
	1	Severe bruising and bad bleeding	500
	1	Fever and Generalized Oedema	720
	1	Cysticercosis	600
	7		3,579
Cows	5	Fever	2,300
	4	Emaciation	1,270
	4	Generalized Tuberculosis	1,770
	3	Septicaemia	1,400
	3	Generalized Oedema	1,310
	1	Johnnes Disease	450
	1	Fever and bad bleeding	530
	1	Septicaemia and Tumours	450
	1	Severe bruising and Fever	600
	1	Generalized Oedema, Tuberculosis and injury	400
	1	Generalized Oedema and Emaciation	200
	25		10,680
Pigs	2	Fever	230
	2	Acute Erysipelas	80
	2	Moribund	220
	1	Septic Pneumonia	60
	1	Uraemia	70
	1	Generalized Oedema	160
	2	Bad bleeding	568
	1	Erysipelas	85
	1	Jaundice and Moribund	430
	1	Generalized Tuberculosis	74
	1	Septicaemia	200
	1	Emaciation	65
	16		2,242

Animals No.		Reason for condemnation	Approx. weight (lbs.)
Sheep	4	Pneumonia acute septic	212
	3	Fever	190
	2	Moribund	120
	3	Emaciation	105
	1	Bruising and Oedema	50
	1	Severe bruising	36
	1	Medicine taint	68
	1	Congestion	40
	1	Generalized Oedema	40
	1	Pyæmia	42
	1	Bad bleeding	60
	1	Gangrene after injury	60
	—		
	20		1,023
	—		
Calves	1	Moribund	45
	1	Umbilical Pyæmia	45
	1	Bad bleeding and Oedema.....	80
	1	Immaturity	20
	1	Moribund	62
	1	Immaturity and deformity	35
	—		
	6		287
	—		

Part Carcasses :

		Tuberculosis		Other Diseases	
		No.	Weight (lbs.)	No.	Weight (lbs.)
Cattle (excluding cows)					
	Heads	85	2,429	31	879
	Trimblings	—	674	—	187
Cows :					
	Heads	17	484	2	55
	Trimblings	—	156	—	1,167
Pigs :					
	Heads	65	830	7	92
	Trimblings	—	31	—	129
Sheep :					
	Trimblings	—	—	—	178
Calves :					
	Trimblings	—	—	—	14
			4,604		2,701

Offal :

		Tuberculosis		Other Diseases	
		No.	Weight (lbs.)	No.	Weight (lbs.)
Cattle (excluding cows)					
	Lungs	96	620	24	160
	Livers	30	447	144	2,032
	Part Livers	—	—	185	1,196
	Hearts	—	—	19	57
	Spleens	3	5	5	7
	Kidneys	—	—	5	5
	Mesenteries	21	72	—	—
Cows :					
	Lungs	30	193	14	95
	Livers	9	132	31	456
	Part Livers	—	—	34	218
	Hearts	—	—	4	11
	Spleens	2	3	3	4
	Kidneys	—	—	2	2
	Mesenteries	1	4	—	—
Pigs :					
	Lungs	16	7	215	107
	Livers	9	23	130	319
	Part Livers	—	—	39	40
	Hearts	3	2	81	42
	Spleens	1	1	1	1
	Kidneys	—	—	11	3
	Mesenteries	4	2	—	—
Sheep :					
	Lungs	—	—	161	78
	Livers	—	—	78	155
	Part Livers	—	—	64	48
	Hearts	—	—	8	4
Calves :					
	Lungs	—	—	4	2
	Livers	—	—	2	3
			1,511		5,045

Inspection of other food

The following were condemned and destroyed after voluntary surrender by the owners :—

192 lbs. miscellaneous tinned foods (rusted and blown tins).
 112 lbs. cod fillets (decomposition).

A complaint was received that a loaf of bread, purchased from a multiple bakery operating from an adjoining area, contained portions of tobacco, and this was confirmed by analysis. The bakers could offer no explanation, having themselves taken all practicable precautions. In view of the firm's previous good record in the district, the Committee issued a formal warning.

Two bottles of “ mineral water ” delivered to a householder were confirmed by analysis to contain no carbon dioxide and only

a trace of sugar. The makers contended that it was impossible for a bottle to leave their factory without containing carbon dioxide, and suggested there had been a defection on the part of a roundsman. The Public Health Committee issued a formal warning and suggested the use of a “ crown cork ” or similar bottle seal, which the manufacturers promised to investigate.

Food premises generally

Additional inspections of food premises made during the year bring the total of premises recorded up to 356, grouped as follows —

Grocery.....	67
Grocery and general (not exclusively food)	58
Bread and cakes.....	4
Sweets and confectionery.....	21
Greengrocery	21
Butchery	34
Fish, wet and/or fried.....	10
Restaurants, cafes, etc.	30
Hotels and licensed premises.....	65
Ice-cream (incidentally to trades other than food)	6
Industrial catering	12
Mobile shops, known to be trading in the district	19
Bakehouses	9
	<hr/>
	356
	<hr/>

The classification is approximate only, since many of the shopkeepers deal in several trades. In such cases, the principal commodity sold has determined the classification.

Registered food premises

The following premises are registered under section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955 :—

Manufacture and sale of ice-cream	11
Sale only of ice-cream	120
Manufacture of sausage and/or cooked meat	13
Fish frying	12

Few of the ice-cream vendors make their own product. Those who do, use the “ cold mix ” method and have no heat-treatment plant.

Food Hygiene Regulations

Visits to food premises totalled 314, and there were 47 other inspections relating to stalls and vehicles. Unsatisfactory conditions were discovered at 46 separate premises, in respect of the following matters, all of which were dealt with informally :—

Absence of hot and/or cold water supply	19
Sink and/or wash-hand basin defective or absent	16
Inadequate lighting	1
Inadequate ventilation	3
Closets defective or absent	9
Structural defects	19
Drains defective or absent	6
Inadequate equipment	18
Dirty equipment	8
Dirty walls and ceilings	18
No separate space for storage of clothing	10
Mobile shops without name and address	13
Lack of attention to personal hygiene.....	4
	<hr/> 144 <hr/>

Milk and Dairies

The following distributors of milk are registered :—

Retail dairymen resident in the district....	32
Retail dairymen from other areas	16
Shopkeepers selling milk in bottles only	5
	<hr/> 53 <hr/>

Six premises are registered as dairies other than dairy farms. Routine inspections were made during the year and conditions were generally satisfactory.

Licences granted or renewed under the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations were as follows :—

	Tuberculin Tested	Pasteurised	Sterilised
Dealers (within the district)	21	23	19
Supplementary (enabling traders from other areas to sell designated milk within the district)....	12	12	9

Slaughter of Animals Acts, 1953 to 1954

Licences have been issued to 40 persons, permitting in all cases the slaughter of cattle, sheep and pigs by means of a captive bolt pistol, and in two cases also by means of electrical stunning apparatus.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS

There was no change in the position regarding licensed sites, of which there are 23, permitting the stationing of 183 caravans, 6 huts and 97 tents. Very few tents are in fact seen, their use being limited to holiday purposes for a few weeks during summer.

Forty-five licences, including renewals, were issued in respect of individual dwellings.

No special problem arose. The sites on the whole were well conducted and there was little cause for complaint. Some of the older sites, however, are still deficient in amenities, and the licensing conditions which are now imposed in respect of new sites cannot be applied to current licences. Control under both the Town and Country Planning Act and the Public Health Act is still operated, for administrative convenience, through the Plans and Town Planning Committee.

RODENT CONTROL

The following table summarizes the work done during the year :—

Premises inspected	370
Premises found to be infested and subsequently treated—	
(a) domestic	325
(b) business	31
	} 356
Second treatments	31
Third treatments	8
Premises cleared	345
Premises not completely cleared	11
No. of dead rats found	404
Treatments of sewage works	22
Treatments of refuse tips	8
Sewer manholes baited and poisoned	150

Treatment of sewers is carried out twice yearly as a matter of routine. Sewage works and refuse tips are kept under observation and treated when required. Rats are now rarely found in any of the Council's sewers. Infestations in other premises are relatively small, and it is unusual to have a " kill " exceeding ten rats.

It was not necessary to serve formal notices under section 4 of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949. Visits to farms confirmed that most farmers are taking appropriate steps for rat destruction on agricultural premises.

AIR POLLUTION

The measurement of atmospheric grit and sulphur was continued by the use of 4 grit gauges and 9 sulphur-dioxide instruments, grouped around the Hams Hall electricity generating stations. The results of analysis of the deposits are given below, for each year since observations began in 1948.

Total solid deposit (expressed in tons per sq. mile per month).

	Lea Marston	Bacons End	Nether Whitacre	Coleshill
1948 (4 months only)	30.3	10.04	—	—
1949	22.99	14.23	—	—
1950	24.05	9.22	—	—
1951	26.12	11.03	—	—
1952	15.63	11.10	—	—
1953	17.14	10.89	—	—
1954	22.55	18.13	—	—
1955	13.92	13.61	12.93	12.63
1956	13.35	11.98	12.46	9.39
1957	12.8	9.56	12.62	9.16

Sulphur gases (empirical units).

The figures for Lea Marston are the average of seven gauges up to 1954 and the average of eight gauges from 1955 onwards.

	Lea Marston	Bacons End
1948 (4 months only)	0.91	0.79
1949	1.04	0.91
1950	1.02	0.99
1951	0.93	0.83
1952	0.94	1.11
1953	0.94	1.17
1954	0.84	0.92
1955	0.98	1.03
1956	1.11	1.18
1957	1.06	1.11

Annual rainfall (at Lea Marston)

1949	23.57 inches
1950	25.21 ,,
1951	32.59 ,,
1952	25.87 ,,
1953	22.60 ,,
1954	31.12 ,,
1955	22.30 ,,
1956	23.39 ,,
1957	24.03 ,,

It will be observed that the grit deposits at Bacons End and Lea Marston during 1957 were a little below average, and that the level of sulphur pollution at Bacons End tends to rise. The grit gauges at Coleshill and Whitacre Heath have not been in operation long enough to draw reliable inferences, but it appears that the new “ C ” generating station has produced no significant increase so far.

The burning spoil bank at Arley Colliery was brought under effective control during the year, and the nuisance from it abated.

The installation of grit-arresting plant at Keresley Colliery was in progress at the end of the year.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT 1948. (SECTION 50)

The bodies of three persons were buried by the Council at a total cost of £74 8s. 0d., towards which £27 19s. 6d. was recovered from death grants and insurance policies.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

During the year the completion of the schemes in the villages of Fillongley and Shustoke enabled more houses to be provided with modern sanitary accommodation. At the end of the year another village scheme for the village of Berkswell was the subject of advertisements for tenders. A sewer extension in Upper Eastern Green Lane, Allesley was completed.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

The regular collection of all waste materials was satisfactorily maintained throughout the year.

FOOD AND DRUGS INSPECTION

I think the following report, for which I am indebted to Mr. J. S. Preston, the County Food and Drugs Inspector, will be of interest and I am, therefore, reproducing it in full.

Report of Chief Sampling Officer under the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, relative to the samples procured within the area of the Meriden Rural District Council, during the year ended the 31st March, 1958.

	<i>No. of samples</i>	<i>No. unsatisfactory</i>
Aspirin tablets.....	1	—
Baking powder	1	—
Beef dripping	1	—
Boric acid ointment	1	—
Bread.....	4	—
Butter drops	1	—
Buttered rolls and scones	2	2
Compound cooking fat	1	—

	<i>No. of samples</i>	<i>No. unsatisfactory</i>
Cream	3	—
Dried vegetables	1	—
Gin	2	—
Golden raising powder	1	—
Ground coffee	1	—
Honey	1	—
Ice cream	3	—
Influenza powder	2	1
Jam	1	—
Lard	1	—
Malt vinegar	1	—
Margarine.....	1	—
Milk	136	1
Milk powder	1	—
Potted salmon	1	—
Rum flavoured sauce.....	1	—
Sausages (beef)	3	1
Sausages (pork)	5	2
Whisky	4	—
Yeast extract	1	—
Totals	182	7

The milk samples showed particularly satisfactory results, only one sample—of Channel Islands milk—being found to be slightly deficient in fat, the content being 3.9% as opposed to the minimum limit of 4% of fat prescribed for milk of this description. This sample was taken from a retailer who obtained his supplies from a dairy situated outside the Meriden Rural District. It appeared that the discrepancy may have been due to the improper mixing of the milk as it was bottled at the dairy. A considerable number of samples, however, including Channel Islands milk, has been procured from the dairy both before and since this particular occurrence, without complaint.

With regard to the other samples shown in the foregoing list as unsatisfactory, the brief particulars are as follows :—

- (1) Buttered rolls (Informal).—Butter portion consisted of fat resembling margarine.
- (2) Buttered scones (Official).—Butter portion consisted of fat resembling margarine.

These two samples were obtained, on different occasions, at a cafe. The first sample was taken informally and, in view of the result of this, an official check was made. The proprietors of the cafe were subsequently prosecuted in respect of the sale of food not of the substance demanded and were fined £5, with £2 10s. 0d. costs.

- (3) Influenza powder (Informal)—deficient of 25% of acety-salicylic acid.

The above sample was procured at a retail shop, from a product which had been received from a firm of manufacturing chemists. A further official sample was subsequently taken but this proved to be satisfactory. There is no doubt that the result of the informal sample was due to the ingredients of the product not having been properly mixed in the correct proportions.

- (4) Sausages (beef) (Official)—contained 60 parts per million of sulphur dioxide.

- (5) Sausages (pork) (Official)—contained 120 parts per million of sulphur dioxide.

Sausages are permitted to contain up to 450 parts per million of sulphur dioxide as a preservative agency but in the above two cases the required notices declaring the fact that the products contain preservative were not displayed at the place of sale. The attention of the vendors concerned was drawn to the omission.

- (6) Sausages (pork) (Official)—contained 43% of meat.

Although since the Ministry of Food Price Control Order was revoked in 1953, there has been no legal enforceable standard applicable to sausages and sausage meat, it has been usual for pork sausages and sausage meat to contain not less than 65% of meat and in the few instances in which the meat content of a sample has fallen appreciably below this, the Public Analyst has certified it to be unsatisfactory. In a number of such cases, legal proceedings have successfully been taken under the Food and Drugs Act although, in each case, it has been necessary to go through the somewhat cumbersome procedure of providing evidence as to the meat content of sausages in a particular area and asking the Magistrates to fix a standard in accordance with the evidence before the Court.

The vendor of the above sample stated that a mistake had been made when the sampling officer had purchased the pork sausages and that, in fact, beef sausages had inadvertently been supplied. In view of the very serious deficiency in the meat content of the sample, however, legal proceedings were instituted and these resulted in the defendant being fined £1, with £3 costs.

General

In view of the fact that the foregoing details relate to part of the area only for which this department is responsible, it should be pointed out that many articles are sold over relatively wide areas and in order to avoid unnecessary duplication, samples of known products are not normally taken in the various districts of the county, except for special examination to check deterioration during storage. This remark applies particularly to pre-packed articles which now form a very large proportion of foods and drugs sold by retail. Also, during normal visits to traders, articles are examined to ascertain that they comply with the various labelling requirements of the relevant Orders and Regulations applicable to them.

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